



May 21st, 2026

National Cultural Policy Submission

As the peak national body for the research, teaching and writing of Australian literature, the Association for the Study of Australian Literature (ASAL) appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the conversation regarding the next National Cultural Policy.

ASAL welcomed *Revive*, which saw the establishment of Creative Australia and its new councils and set out clear priorities (the five pillars) while recognising as a core mission that “Australian students have the opportunity to receive an education that includes culture, creativity, humanities and the arts”. ASAL would like to see these commitments continued and developed in the forthcoming National Cultural Policy and applied to all levels of learning and creative practice from early childhood to university studies and postgraduate research. ASAL would especially like to emphasise the importance of universities to cultural industries. The tertiary sector and its attendant associations including ASAL train teachers, librarians, authors, critics, artists and scholars, and are central to keeping culture flourishing.

The most recent National Cultural Policy has made some very important inroads in renewing arts culture in Australia, as the delivered actions evidence. The introduction of Writing Australia has been an excellent development with practical impacts as well as sending a strong and much welcomed signal that cultures of storytelling, writing and reading are essential elements of our nation’s identity and economy.

ASAL would respectfully submit that given the success and impact of these programs, a continued commitment to the development of reading, writing and story-telling cultures in the next National Cultural Policy is necessary.

ASAL supports the proposed Books Create Australia submission (<https://bookscreate.com.au>). This blueprint promises multiple positive outcomes including the amplification of the First Nations stories and storytellers; the generation of new revenue streams for authors; and an increase in the international impact of Australian authors and writing.

ASAL supports investment in traditional literary infrastructure (such as the National Library of Australia) and digital collections including two interrelated databases: AustLit (www.austlit.edu.au), which is Australia’s authoritative bibliographic and digital humanities repository for Australian storytelling, and BlackWords (<https://www.austlit.edu.au/blackwords>), which specifically supports First Nations cultural knowledge and data collection. In recognition of its importance, in 2025 AustLit was admitted to UNESCO’s ‘Australian Memory of the World’ national cultural heritage register. The funding of AustLit federally would ensure that BlackWords can continue its work and expand its engagement with, and service to, First Nations peoples and the broader Australian community.



ASAL also strongly calls for a sustainable reinvestment in tertiary education in literature, and especially Australian literature. As the Federal Government is aware, the 2020 Job-ready Graduates package doubled the cost of Humanities degrees and disadvantaged many of the very practitioners, educators and audiences that the National Cultural Policy is intended to empower.

Australia continues to need a policy that addresses both author-focused and community-based creative enterprises, and cultural and research-focused institutions that are part of the cultural ecosystem (the “strong cultural infrastructure” that the current policy identifies). A national policy that recognises the importance and interrelatedness of research, education, and cultural participation is essential for Australia’s creative and economic future.

Yours sincerely,



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